



MODUL *ESSAY WRITING*
(PBI225)

MODUL SESI 2
THE STRUCTURE OF ESSAY

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THE STRUCTURE OF ESSAY

A. The Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, students are able to

1. Review the paragraph to essay
2. Identify the parts of essay (essay structure)
3. Organise/structure an essay correctly

B. FROM PARAGRAPH TO ESSAY

A paragraph is a group of sentences about a single *topic*. Together, the sentences of the paragraph explain the writer's *main idea* (most important idea) about the topic. In academic writing, a paragraph is often between **five and ten sentences** long, but it can be longer or shorter, depending on the topic. The first sentence of a paragraph is usually indented (moved in) a few spaces.

A paragraph has three basic parts: **the topic sentence, the supporting sentences and the concluding sentence.**

1. The topic sentence.

This is the main idea of the paragraph . It is usually the first sentence of the paragraph, and it is the most general sentence of the paragraph . It gives the writer's main idea or opinion about the topic and helps the reader understand what the paragraph is going to talk about. The part of the topic sentence that announces the specific area to be discussed is called the controlling idea. Notice how the topic sentence of the model states both **the topic** and **the controlling idea**:

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.

Topic

controlling idea

Immigrants have contributed many delicious foods to US cuisine.

controlling idea

topic

Indonesia is a very interesting country to visit.

Topic

controlling idea

Here are **three important points to remember** about a topic sentence.

a. A topic sentence is a **complete sentence**; that is, it contains at least **one subject and one verb**. The following are **not complete** sentences because they do not have verbs:

- How to register for college classes.
- Driving on freeways

b. A topic sentence contains both a **topic and a controlling idea**. It names the topic and then limits the topic to a specific area to be discussed in the space of a single paragraph.

- Driving on freeways requires skill and alertness.

Topic

controlling idea

c. A topic sentence is the most general statement in the paragraph because it gives only the main idea. It **does not give any specific details**.

- The Arabic origin of many English words is not always obvious. (topic sentence)
- The slang expression so *long* (meaning "good-bye") is probably a corruption of the Arabic *salaam*. (too specific)
- English has been influenced by other languages. (too general)

2. The supporting sentences.

These are sentences that talk about or explain the topic sentence. They are more detailed ideas that **follow the topic sentence**. Supporting sentences **explain or prove the topic sentence**. One of the biggest problems in student writing is that student writers often fail to support their ideas adequately. They need to use specific details to be thorough and convincing. There are several kinds of specific supporting details: **examples, statistics, and quotations**.

Examples are perhaps the easiest kind of supporting detail to use because you can often take examples from your own knowledge and experience. You don't have to search the library or the Internet for supporting material. Furthermore, examples make your writing lively and interesting, and your reader is more likely to remember your point if you support it with a

memorable example. Words and phrases that introduce examples include *for example, for instance, and such as*.

Even when a first date is a disaster, a couple can still become good friends. For example, my first date with Greg was terrible. I thought he was coming to pick me up at 6.30, but instead he came at 6.00. I didn't have time to do my hair, and my make-up looked messy. When I got into his car, I scraped my leg against the car door and tore my tights. Next, he took me to an Italian restaurant for dinner, and I accidentally dropped some spaghetti on my shirt. Then we went to a film. Greg asked me which film I wanted to see, and I chose a romantic comedy. He fell asleep during the film, and I got angry. Now that Greg and I are good friends, we can look back and laugh at how terrible that first date was!

Quotations from reliable and knowledgeable sources are good supporting details. There are two kinds of quotations: **direct and indirect**. In a **direct quotation**, you copy another person's exact words (spoken or written) and enclose them in quotation marks. In an **indirect quotation**, you report the person's words without quotation marks, but with a reporting expression such as *according to XYZ . . .* or *XYZ believes that . . .*

Like quotations, **statistics** are good supporting details. Study the graph and then read the paragraph that uses data from it. Notice the reporting verb that gives the source of information. As you do with quotations, you must also **cite the source of statistical data**.

3. **The concluding sentence.**

This may be found as the last sentence of a paragraph. It can finish a paragraph by repeating the main idea or just giving a final comment about the topic. A concluding sentence serves two purposes:

- 1) It signals the end of the paragraph.
- 2) It leaves the reader with the most important ideas to remember. It can do this in two ways:
 - ✓ By summarizing the main points of the paragraph
 - OR
 - ✓ By repeating the topic sentence in different words

A paragraph **does not always need a concluding sentence**. For single paragraphs, especially long ones, a concluding sentence is helpful to the reader because it is a reminder of the important points. However, a concluding sentence is **not needed for every paragraph** in a multiparagraph essay.

End-of-Paragraph Signals followed by a comma	End-of-Paragraph Signals NOT followed by a comma
Finally, In brief, In conclusion, Indeed, In short, Lastly, Therefore, Thus, To sum up,	The evidence suggests that There can be no doubt that These examples show that We can see that

A concluding sentence that sums up the paragraph reminds the reader of what the writer's main idea and supporting points were. A sentence that restates the main idea should give the same information in a slightly different way, perhaps by using different words or by using different word order. A concluding sentence **should not introduce a new point**.

C. PARTS OF ESSAY (THE STRUCTURE OF ESSAY)

An essay is a piece of writing that is written **to convince someone of something** or to simply inform the reader about a particular topic. In order for the reader to be convinced or adequately informed, the essay must include several important components **to make it flow in a logical way**. The main parts (or sections) to an essay are the **introduction, body, and conclusion**. In a standard short essay, five paragraphs can provide the reader with enough information in a short amount of space. For a research paper or dissertation, however, it is essential that more than five paragraphs are present in order not to overwhelm the reader with too much information in one paragraph.

A basic essay consists of **three main parts: introduction, body, and conclusion**. Following this format will help you write and organize an essay. However, flexibility is important. While keeping this basic essay format in mind, let the topic and specific assignment guide the writing and organisation.

1. Introduction

An essay begins with a brief introduction, which prepares the audience to read the essay. An effective introduction should:

- **Catch the reader's attention**, which can be done, for example, by using a direct announcement, a quotation, a question, a definition, an unusual comparison, or a controversial position;
- **Introduce the topic of the essay**, (in other words, inform the reader of and provide context for the topic being discussed);
- **Introduce the main idea** (otherwise known as the thesis or claim) of the essay;
- **Introduce the purpose** of the essay (will it inform, argue, persuade, describe, narrate, classify, etc.?).

The introduction guides your reader into the paper by introducing the topic. It should begin with a **hook** that **catches the reader's interest**. This hook could be a quote, an analogy, a question, etc. After getting the reader's attention, the introduction should give some **background information** on the topic. The ideas within the introduction should be general enough for the reader to understand the main claim and gradually become more specific to lead into the **thesis statement**. The thesis statement states the aim of the paper and may give insight into the author's examples and evidence.

The thesis statement concisely states the **main idea or argument** of the essay, sets **limits on the topic**, and can **indicate the organization of the essay**. The thesis works as a **road map** for the entire essay, showing the readers what you have to say and which main points you will use to support your ideas.

2. Body Paragraphs

An essay includes body paragraphs, which develop the main idea (thesis or claim) of the essay. An effective body paragraph should:

- Explain, illustrate, discuss, or provide evidence to support the main idea (thesis or claim) of the essay;
- Discuss only one aspect of the main idea (whenever you move on to a new supporting point, start a new body paragraph);
- Work together with the other body paragraphs to support your essay's main idea. Work together with the other body paragraphs to create a clear, cohesive paper (clarity and coherence can be achieved through the use of transitions).

The body of the essay **supports** the main points presented in the thesis. Each point is developed by **one or more paragraphs** and supported with **specific details**. These details can include support from research and experiences, depending on the assignment. In addition to this support, the author's own analysis and discussion of the topic ties ideas together and draws conclusions that support the thesis.

The body paragraph includes the evidence and support of the paper in addition to the author's ideas. There are 3 (three) types of logical ordering of ideas:

- a) Chronological order---order of time, good for narratives
- b) Spatial order--- good for descriptions of locations; top to bottom
- c) Emphatic order--- least important to most important; most common for college writing.

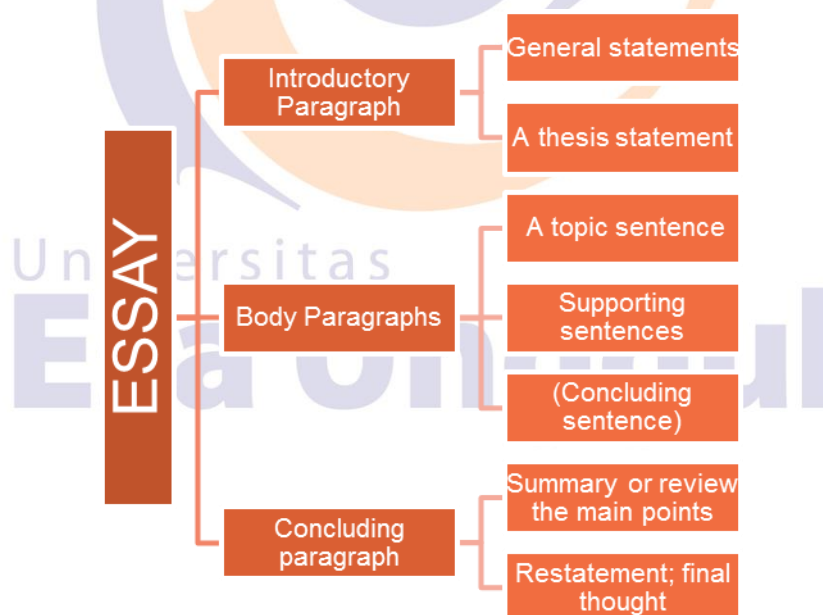
Transition sentences are present to create a good flow to the essay. **Transitions** connect paragraphs to each other and to the thesis. They are used within and between paragraphs to help the paper flow from one topic to the next. These transitions can be one or two words ("first," "next," "in addition," etc.) or one or two sentences that bring the reader to the next main point. The topic sentence of a paragraph often serves as a transition.

3. Conclusion

An essay ends with a **brief conclusion**, which brings the essay to a logical end. An effective conclusion should:

- Provide closure for the reader by **reviewing main points** (make sure that this review is brief – after all, these points have already been fully developed in the body paragraphs), linking the main idea of the essay to a larger issue, predicting an outcome related to the main idea, giving an opinion, or using a quotation that helps sum up an essential aspect of your main point;
- Remind readers of the primary focus of the essay, which can be done by **restating the main idea in different words**;
- Avoid introducing new ideas;
- Avoid apologies.

The conclusion brings together all the main points of the essay. It refers back to the thesis statement and leaves readers with **a final thought** and sense of closure by resolving any ideas brought up in the essay. It should **restate the main arguments** in a simplified manner. It may also **address the implications** of the argument. In the conclusion, new topics or ideas that were **not** developed in the paper should not be introduced.



From the chart above:

An essay introduction consists of two parts: a few **general statements** to attract your reader's attention and **a thesis statement** to state the main idea of the essay. A thesis statement for an essay is like a topic sentence for a paragraph:

It names the specific topic and gives the reader a general idea of the contents of the essay. The body consists of one or more paragraphs. Each paragraph develops a subdivision of the topic, so the number of paragraphs in the body will vary with the number of subdivisions or subtopics. The conclusion, like the concluding sentence in a paragraph, is a summary or review of the main points discussed in the body. An essay has **unity and coherence**, just as a paragraph does. **Transition signals** and the repetition of key nouns link the paragraphs into a cohesive whole.

D. REFERENCES

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